

Testimony of Cecil H. Underwood
Governor of the State of West Virginia
To the Subcommittee on National Economic Growth,
Natural Resources and Regulatory Affairs
of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight
Washington, D.C.
May 20, 1998

As the governor of a state whose economy has depended on energy development, I am mindful that few have more to lose than West Virginians if our nation embraces the Kyoto Protocol.

In West Virginia, we stand to lose thousands of coal mining and related jobs, as well as manufacturing jobs – especially within those companies that use substantial amounts of energy.

If the United States becomes party to an agreement whose underpinning science is so suspect that many of our leading experts question its validity, we will see coal, chemical, plastics and aluminum employees by the thousands move from the workplace to unemployment lines.

A recent study of the effects of the Kyoto agreement by **CONSAD** Research Corporation of Pittsburgh concludes that: by 2002 nearly 12,000 West Virginia jobs will be lost; and by 2010 nearly 26,000 West Virginia jobs will have disappeared and the state's gross domestic product will have declined by more than \$3.1 billion a year.

As West Virginians, we are seeing a concerted effort on the part of the United States government to undermine the economies of entire regions of our nation.

I am sworn to work for the people of West Virginia, and I intend to do so.

This is a fight I must take on.

The Kyoto Protocol architects' concerns about the environment and quality of life evidently do not extend to West Virginia and the industrial heartland of the United States.

They wrap their arguments about global warming in the cloak of science.

But their sciences are social and political science.

As I testify here today, I cannot avoid asking these questions:

Why should we support a policy that would allow emerging economic powers, such as China, India and Mexico, to avoid the strict industrial emission reductions contemplated in the Kyoto Protocol for the economies of the United States and other advanced nations?

Why should our nation be a party to a policy that creates an uneven economic and environmental playing field?

Why should we rush to participate in an initiative that creates untold economic distress at home and fails to make any material difference in environmental quality?

Why would the world's leading nation agree to take part in an agreement that jeopardizes its security, its economy and its future?

At an earlier time, such an agreement would have been considered almost traitorous.

I shall not yield without a fight with the politically inspired and scientifically bankrupt advocates of the Kyoto Protocol who would preside over the dismantling of the West Virginia economy.

Ladies and gentlemen, we repeatedly must send the word that we - as a people - are committed to: taking a balanced and logical view of global environmental issues; resisting any and all attempts to undermine the U.S. economy through political coercion; recognizing that our nation has done more over time to improve the global environment than any on earth; and continuing to meet our responsibility to improve the environment through the application of emerging technologies.

As a nation, historically we have tried to do the right thing.

As a nation, we shall continue to do the right thing - if we are allowed to do so.

As a nation, we must be able to sustain an economy that encourages innovation and rewards success.

As a nation, we must resist the siren's song of those who would help the people of the Third World by punishing the world's strongest economies.

We are willing to address global environmental issues, but we cannot afford to do so if we are expected to destroy our economy in the process.

Last September, Kentucky Governor Paul Patton and I successfully sponsored a resolution at the Southern Governors Association Conference that the United States should not sign any agreement from the Kyoto negotiations that places our nation at an economic disadvantage.

Several months ago, the business community and organized labor in West Virginia joined in opposition to the Kyoto agreement, and our Legislature and I have heard their unified plea.

In April, I signed into law a bill passed by our Legislature that prohibits the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection from proposing or implementing rules regulating greenhouse gas emissions from industrial sites until such time the U.S. Senate ratifies the Kyoto Protocol and Congress enacts legislation that implements it.

I believe that day never will come if we work together to make our case known.

We must continue to take our case to the Senate and House of Representatives.

Thank you for listening to my deep concerns about the Kyoto Protocol and its many, many flaws.